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Islamism Its Rise and Decline

A Study of Mohammed, His Teachings and of the Catholic Missionary Apostolate Among the Moslems

by

Thomas O'Shaughnessy, S.J.

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A STUDY OF MOHAMMED, HIS TEACHINGS AND OF THE CATHOLIC MISSIONARY APOSTOLATE AMONG THE MOSLEMS

By

THOMAS O'SHAUGHNESSY, S.J.

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ISLAMISM

1.

The Prophet and His Message

1. Over the lintel of a walled-up portal in the great Umayyad Mosque, once the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, in Demascus a visitor may still decipher this inscription carved in ancient Greek characters: "Thy kingdom, O Christ, is an eternal kingdom and Thy dominion endureth throughout all generations." Christians recognize in the text another confirmation of the universal and everlasting reign of Christ, the true and eternal King. But the Moslems who frequent this and ten thousand other mosques believe that the theocracy, founded by Mohammed in the 7th century of the Christian era, was destined to complete and eventually to supplant the revelation given to men by Christ. To them Mohammed's dispensation is to endure to the last age of the material universe and into eternity for those who have accepted his creed in this earthly life.

2. It is not hard to understand their error since Mohammed's religion has, in point of fact, already lasted thirteen centuries and at present shows no discernible signs of total collapse at least for another hundred years or more. The number of those who acknowledge Mohammed as God's intermediary and revere his compositions as God's word stands now in the neighborhood of three hundred millions dispersed over Asia, Africa and Europe. Today Mohammed's is the only religion that rivals Christianity in growth by natural increase and conversions. This together with the paradoxical fact that its creed and social structure are now being rapidly undermined by Western materialism, make it of primary importance as a Catholic missionary problem whose solution cannot safely be deferred much longer.

3. Mohammed, the founder of the vast socio-religious system that now bears his name, passed the first forty years of his life

obscurely as shepherd and cameleer in his native town of Mecca in Arabia. During a visit made to Syria while in the employ of a wealthy widow who later became his wife, he acquired superficial acquaintance with the doctrines and practices of Christianity which with Judaism was already established in the environs of his birthplace. When about forty years old (610 A.D.) the self-styled "warner" of his people began to experience more frequent attacks of a malady that brought on profuse perspiration and a trancelike condition. In these seizures he claimed to have received divine revelations of a new religious dispensation for his countrymen. His tenacious adherence to belief in one God and his consequent censures of the Meccan gods that had made the town a center of pilgrimage for all Arabia awakened the anger of his fellow citizens who saw an important source of their revenue imperiled by his preachments. As a result, Mohammed and his converts were forced, in 622, the first year of the Mohammedan era, to take refuge in Medina. There he was welcomed as a civil and religious chief. From Medina he gradually extended his power by persuasion and force until, at his death in 632 A.D., the whole of Arabia was subjected to his domination.

4. The divine revelations supposedly imparted to Mohammed are contained in the Koran. Their subject matter consists in long sections from Genesis and Exodus and other books of the Old Testament and from the Apocryphal Gospels, modified and adapted to his purposes by the *Prophet*. Mixed in with these selections are pieces of folklore then common in Arabia, accounts of paradise, terrifying descriptions of the day of judgment and future punishment, occasional impassioned appeals to the unrepentant and hymns extolling God's majesty, some of which bear the mark of true poetical genius. In the longer chapters composed at Medina are found lengthy repetitious passages which represent an effort at legal codification. Throughout the book there is no attempt to separate the sacred from the profane. Dogma, regulations regarding inheritance, the making of wills, the time of weaning and even rules of etiquette in public assembly,—all indifferently find place in this allegedly divine transmission to mankind. A kind of rhymed prose and, in some chap-

ters, the use of meter go to enhance the poetical qualities of the message and its appeal to the ear of Arab listeners.

5. In imitation of the Hebrew Prophets, Mohammed claimed for himself the title of "warner" and threatened dire misfortune to anyone questioning his character and office. His concept of prophecy was apparently determined by those passages in Holy Writ which represent the prophet as head of the community in both the civil and religious domain.

6. According to Mohammed, God raised up among each people and nation of times past a national message-bearer to teach them sacred texts and religious precepts in their own language. Sometimes these prophets succeeded in their mission of combating polytheism and idolatry and were accepted by their nation. At times, too, they were rejected with the consequent dire punishment of the guilty. Twenty-five are named in the Koran, among whom the more important are Abraham, Moses, Adam, Noah, Joseph, Solomon, John the Baptist and Jesus.

7. For Mohammed then, Judaism and Christianity were but national forms of the one true religion, revealed in ages past, but now superseded by the religion of "Islam" or "submission" to God's will. Though there is no essential difference, in his mind, between the prophets, yet some have in previous dispensations ranked higher than the rest. Mohammed asserted these differences in general terms, but never ventured to exalt his own role after the fashion of later Koranic commentators. Beyond having received a divine revelation, he laid claim to no other miracles but in speaking of himself inclined to discreet indefiniteness rather than to injudicious comparisons. Only after his death was initiated the process of idealization that strove to put the *Prophet* on a plane with Christ and attributed to him supernatural powers which he had disclaimed in his lifetime.

8. In his early efforts to lead his countrymen to the worship of one true God, Mohammed seemed prompted by disgust at the base idolatry of his Meccan environment. The results of his attempt to better the moral and social conditions of his contemporaries are generally overrated, but he did succeed in abolishing

the unnatural crime of killing female infants at birth and the custom of blood feuding that had become a kind of sport in Arabia of the early 7th century.

9. There is little doubt that his monotheistic preachments and social reforms were initially disinterested and sincere. But the high spiritual aims he professed were obscured as his political maneuverings prospered. Religiously sincere as a simple reformer, he became avid for power as a self-styled prophet and undisguisedly "this-worldly" as a conqueror. His apparent guilt may have been mitigated by the fact that his "prophetic" beginnings were shrouded in hallucinations, but even these were induced by his own presumption. His evident insincerity on one score, moreover, is inexcusable. In his accounts of earlier prophets he had proposed their miracles as the objective criteria of a prophetic mission. To escape the logical consequence obvious in his own self-confessed lack of miraculous power he sought refuge in sophistry, claiming that miracles do not necessarily engender faith and that God works miracles through His prophets only to inspire fear. If he never became aware of his own self-deceit and of the emptiness of his prophetic claims, it was for having deliberately shut his eyes to the truth.

10. The manner in which Mohammed claimed to have received divine communications accounts for the peculiar disconnected character and numerous contradictory texts of the Koran. As need arose, each "revelation" was recited to him word for word by the Archangel Gabriel and then delivered orally to his followers soon afterwards. This fact explains, too, the fluid quality of many chapters of the book which was occasioned in great part by daily requirements over a long succession of years. The messages thus imparted were memorized and later written down by those who received them. After the death of the *Prophet* they were arranged in haphazard fashion in order of length, without regard for content or chronological sequence, and finally gathered into one volume. Today, by dint of forcible suppression of variants in the early centuries of Islamism's existence, there is but one text recognized by all Moslems. Modern critical studies of the text of the Koran have discovered no valid reason

for denying either its authorship in substantials or the historicity of the book where it deals with ordinary events occurring in the life of Mohammed and in the early years of Islamic beginnings.

11. It is the Koran above all else that unites the Islamic community wherever found. Mohammed, as a mere intermediary between God and men, plays a passive part in the Koranic scheme of revelation. For its Prophet orthodox Islamism claims no role similar to that implied in the authoritive "Ego autem dico vobis" of Christ, our Lord. Contrary to common belief, Moslems do not worship Mohammed and those instructed in their religion recognize in him no special qualities beyond those demanded by propriety in one who bears a divine message to the human race. For this reason they reprobate the terms Mohammedan and Mohammedanism as synonyms of Moslem and Islam, since they suggest a relation, identical with that of our Saviour to Christianity, but absent from Islamism. This usage of Mohammed's followers is justified if one accepts their concept of their Prophet as the final intermediary of a religion ageless and detached from the passing currents of human events. But objectively, Mohammed's claims are groundless and, despite the good faith of the great masses of Islam, he must be regarded as the founder of a false religious system which is properly his own eclectic contribution to history and is thus rightly called by his name.

12. It is true, however, that the Islamic creed consists only secondarily in the acceptance of Mohammed as Allah's messenger; primarily it is the acknowledgment of his revelation objectively considered. Hence, the unique importance of the Koran in the Islamic economy of Providence toward men. For the Moslem it is the "one thing necessary" and as a psalter, a code of law and a history of everything of importance that has happened in God's dealings with the human race, it makes of him a "man of one book" in the exact meaning of that phrase. At times the veneration accorded the Koran has bordered on adoration. Today orthodox teaching holds it to be the uncreated word of God of which the original, coeternal with God, is preserved in heaven.

13. To interpret this book and to supply its many lacunae in points of dogma and practice, Islam has had recourse to the "Tra-

ditions" or *Hadith*. These traditions, at first oral and later gathered into collections, are supposed to recount the ordinary behavior or "sunna" of the Prophet in the most minute details of daily life. The two chief Moslam sects, the Sunnites and Shi'ites, agree in accepting tradition as a valid source of teaching but recognize as authoritative only their own peculiar compilations. Indeed, considerable discrimination must be exercised in taking any of the so-called "Traditions" at their face value, since the original aim of Mohammed's companions in transmitting their anecdotes was edification and personal direction rather than historical exactitude.

2.

Mohammedanism's Dogmatic Groundwork

14. Like other merely Human societies, the body professing the faith of Mohammed is free from error neither in expounding its sacred book nor in defining accurately the object of its belief. To perform these offices, as well as to condemn radical departures from its creed and practice, no authentic religious authority exists in Islam. Deprived of a teaching body infallible in the spiritual and moral guidance of its adherents, the Mohammedan religion is laid open to the inroads of emotion and caprice, to the whims and passions of men, to bizarre interpretations of its deposit of belief and to practices, such as those of certain Moslem confraternities, that manifest pathological unbalance if not diabolical influence. Thus Islamism, lacking the organic unity which permits growth and development and is imparted by authority, is permanently cast in the mould of Koranic legalism and unadaptable prescription.

15. Even the institution of the caliphate was never intended to provide a source of doctrinal guidance or authentic interpreta-

tion. Analogies drawn between it and the Papacy are baseless, although Turkey in the 18th and 19th centuries attempted to take advantage of this misconceived similarity, then prevalent in Europe, to retain political power in Moslem lands that had passed under European control. The caliph, as the successor of Mohammed and the highest executive officer in the theocratic Islamic community, possessed jurisdiction which extended even to control of the army and the machinery of state, but which in religious matters was limited to maintaining unaltered a system already permanently fixed and incapable of modification and adjustment to new conditions.

16. The importance attributed in Islamism to the content of Mohammed's revelation is reciprocated by the prime necessity of actual faith. Circumcision is practiced among Moslems as a matter of counsel, but it is not that operation that makes the subject a member of the Islamic community. For that the profession of faith in God's unicity and Mohammed's prophetic mission is the sole requisite. The core of Islamic belief is precisely this profession of a "pure" monotheism; as long as that is safeguarded, little else matters. This profession, daily renewed in the ritual worship, guarantees the salvation of the believer.

17. In Catholic teaching faith is the "foundation and root of all justification," but to be efficacious for salvation it must be enlivened by charity and externalized by a life patterned on Christ's. In the Mohammedan system, however, as in that of the Protestant innovators of the 16th century, salvation depends on faith alone. The Moslem who sins staunchly but believes more staunchly must suffer for a time in hell, but the "infidel" who has not accepted Islamism's fundamental creed is doomed to hopeless damnation. Moslems maintain that all other faiths but that of Islam have departed from the basic and necessary belief in God's unicity; all who profess them are, in their eyes, guilty of the one unpardonable sin of "putting other beings on an equal plane with God" and thus render their prayers and good deeds useless for salvation. (Christians so sin by their belief in the Trinity, which Mohammed understood to be composed of God, Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary.)

18. Besides His unicity, the God of the Koran is distinguished above all by the qualities of omnipotence and transcendence. This characteristically Mohammedan concept of God is the dominant impression left by Islam's sacred book despite its author's crude and confused notions of the divine Being. For Mohammed God is an all powerful despot ruling by caprice and arbitrary decree. But with Him he associates his own pettiness, his bargainings and his rescinding of contracts. Shadows of the Homeric gods of the Iliad appear in the picture drawn of God as an artful plotter. "They plotted and God plotted, but God is the best of plotters." Throughout the Koran God is found ever ready to acknowledge His mistakes, the fluctuations of His thought, His intention supplying His Prophet's slips of memory. "If God abrogates a law, will He not take care to replace it by a better?"

19. While Mohammed, ignorant and untrained in theological speculation, viewed God in an anthropomorphic fashion, later Islamic theologians in their zeal to prove His independence of the laws of reason, denied the analogy of being and sought refuge in agnosticism. This over-insistence on God's omnipotence led to the rejection of secondary causes by the Arab occasionalist philosophers of the 11th and 12th centuries and brought them to absurd conclusions in the domains of ontology and rational psychology. Similar exaggerations determined the Islamic concept of morality and its norm. To say God can do no evil is a contradiction for the Moslem, since evil is what God forbids and good what He commands. Blasphemy and murder are evil only because forbidden. Neither is of its nature repugnant to right order; both become so only after the promulgation of a divine law forbidding them.

20. On the other hand, despite facile assertions to the contrary, it is not easy to prove from the Koran the doctrine of absolute predestination commonly attributed to Islamism. In the order of execution, God certainly confers the rewards of the Mohammedan paradise on the believer after his meritorious faith. Whether, in the order of intention, His salvific decree excluded from eternity certain individuals is a point that orthodox Islamism

has not considered in any detail. The question is not settled by appealing to the Moslem denial of free will, since Islamism has never been nor is at present at one on that question.

21. The fatalism that is undoubtedly characteristic of those professing Mohammed's faith is the result not of any definite convictions about predestination but rather of the ever present thought of God's arbitrary guidance of the universe. This conviction makes of human history a series of interventions based on the whims of an Entity Whose actions obey no rules of logic and reason. Metaphysical necessity in Islamic theology is inconceivable, since God is independent even of the laws of being. Framed in such concepts of Providence, the personal existence of the believer is regarded as subject to caprice and arbitrary determination that crushes initiative. This notion of despotic and overwhelming power that Islamism associates with God excludes the intimacy and affection of Christianity in its relations with Him Who "was made flesh and dwelt among us," Who addressed His followers: "Little children . . . no longer do I call you servants, . . . but I have called you friends." For the Moslem God is no heavenly Father nor is man capable of the adoptive sonship of sanctifying grace. All such ideas are foreign to a faith for which the term "father" has no meaning beyond that of carnal generation. "He is one God," says the Koran, "God the eternal. He hath not begotten nor been begotten. And no one hath been His equal."

22. The acceptance of the fundamental dogmas of God's unicity and Mohammed's prophetic mission implies for the Moslem belief in the angels, revealed books, the prophets, the day of judgment and the divine decrees regarding good and evil. The foregoing sketch of Islamism's concepts of God and His revelations to mankind through the prophets shows its dependence on Jewish and Christian sources. From those faiths it also borrowed the fundamentals of its angelology and eschatology but there likeness approaches travesty because of the Mohammedan bent to interpret its creed in crass terms of the material.

3.
Five Pillars of Religious Practice

23. The practicing Moslem, besides assenting to Islamism's dogmas, builds his life on the five so-called pillars of religious duty; the reciting of the creed, ritual worship, fasting, almsgiving and pilgrimage. The verbal profession of the formula, "I testify that there is no deity but God and that Mohammed is the messenger of God," makes one a Moslem and is requisite for salvation.

24. Ritual worship consists of a set form of prayers taken from the Koran, for each of which certain postures and gestures are prescribed. For validity it must be preceded by a ceremonial washing with water or sand. The rite is performed facing Mecca at the five times announced each day by the crier from the mosque. In the days of the Ottoman Empire before World War I it was a common sight to see the call to prayer obeyed by the faithful in the public streets and squares with a vigor that proclaimed to the world their pride at belonging to the community of the Prophet. In the past few decades the "practical" spirit of the Occident, with its leanings toward indifferentism in religious matters, has penetrated the cultural centers of Islam. Old fashions in piety have gone out of style so that today in the Near East a public response to the muezzin's summons is rarely seen. On Friday, the Mohammedan holyday, male believers gather in a mosque for this duty, ranging themselves in orderly rows and following with military precision the motions of the imam or prayer leader. At this Friday noon assembly the leader also recites a prayer for the Moslem ruler and delivers a brief address, in modern times usually on a political subject.

25. Any Moslem man may be crier or prayer leader or, after completing the required studies, a doctor of the law. Just as there is no authoritative teaching hierarchy in Islam, so too there is in that religion neither clergy, priesthood nor sacrifice properly

so called. The pilgrim's slaughtering of a victim at Mecca each year, a ceremony repeated in every Moslem land and in many private dwellings on the same occasion, is not a sacrifice in the Catholic sense of the word. According to the Moslem interpretation this act is not an oblation made in acknowledgment of God's dominion and man's dependence, but a mere commemoration of the demand formerly made by God of Abraham in bidding him to slay his son.

26. Total abstinence from food and drink between dawn and dusk is enjoined during the month of Ramadan. This precept is becoming less observed among the city dwelling Moslem proletariat of modern times. When kept however, the fast is severe, especially should the lunar month of Ramadan, in its journey around the solar year, occur in the parching heat of a Near Eastern summer. Legal alms, as distinguished from voluntary gifts, were formerly exacted from all followers of the Prophet. With the rise of states no longer ruled by the Mohammedan code almsgiving has become a matter of personal observance left to the individual. The merit of the act, in accord with the sectarian spirit of Islamism, is conditioned on the recipient's being a Moslem.

27. Once in his lifetime every Moslem able to do so must make a pilgrimage to Mecca during the month set aside each year for the official discharge of this duty. On arriving at the place of pilgrimage the pilgrim performs a number of ceremonies, —circumambulations, stone-throwings and runnings,—which were taken over bodily by Mohammed from the pre-Islamic cult of idols as a sop to the polytheists of Mecca.

28. It is not hard to imagine the deep impression made on the poor and the ignorant at their arrival in Mecca "the most Honored" and "the Glorious" Medina, burial place of the Prophet. After a long journey made in indescribable privation and hardship, packed below the decks of tramp steamers or trudging in caravans across continents, the great brotherhood of Islam, Arab, Turk, Berber, Javanese, Indian, Negro, Mongol and Caucasian,—from the towns, jungles and steppes of three continents face one another in the solemn performance of a common rite in-

stituted, as they believe, by God's direct command to His final intermediary.

29. Islamism has rivaled the true Faith in overriding the superficial criteria of nationality, race and social position. For Mohammed's followers mankind is made up simply of "believers" and those who have not as yet accepted the creed of the Prophet. The pilgrimage is a concrete expression of this leveling of social and racial barriers. It is likewise one of the most powerful means of fostering the fanatical pride and *esprit de corps* characteristic of Islamism wherever met. Its unique value as a means of spreading ideas and popular movements throughout the Moslem world has lately been recognized by Communist Russia. In 1945, for the first time in Soviet history, Moscow officially sponsored the pilgrimage for Russian Moslems and arranged transportation facilities for all desiring to participate. Evidently Russia's rulers were not motivated by any devotion to Islamism for its own sake, since this faith until 1944 shared the ban placed on all religions in the Soviet Union. Those who guide the destinies of world Communism realize the potentialities of the annual concourse at Mecca and Medina as a sounding board to reflect their propaganda to the far corners of Islam. Since constructive social thinking has not kept pace in Islamic lands with industrial development, Communism, spread in this and many other ways, may be a strong influence in forming practical attitudes toward social questions in the Moslem world of tomorrow.

30. Like Communism, the religion of Mohammed believes in the use of physical force to spread its creed. The Communist ideal of world domination through universal class warfare resembles the Mohammedan institution of the "holy war" to subject all men to the sway of Islam. Today, due to changed conditions and an unfavorable balance of political power, the "holy war" to which Islam owes many of its conquests is little insisted upon. Formerly, however, it was proposed by many as a sixth pillar of Islamic practice and to those dying in it provided a sure means of salvation.

31. As can be seen from the preceding outline of Islamic observances, the external rites enjoined manifest a certain solemn

dignity. The ritual worship performed by several hundred at once and guided by the imam is always an impressive sight. But in Islamism these externals are ends in themselves. Beyond them lie no spiritual realities. It is essential to remember this in order to form a true estimate of Mohammed's religion. Moslems are urged to accompany their observances with an interior intention but the formalistic nature of their practices, in which validity is made to depend on a minute and exact discharging of a set of exterior motions, petrifies religious observance by a killing rigidity and routine. In Christ's Church outward signs are symbols of an invisible renewal in a higher order, of an imparting or augmenting of the life of grace within the soul. Such concepts are unknown in orthodox Islamism. In an automatic fulfillment of external prescriptions lies the ultimate reality for a follower of the Prophet.

32. A similar externalism characterizes Islamism in the realm of morals. Sin is looked on as an offense against society or against a legalistic abstraction rather than a personal affront to God. Its sanctions, where these are had, are mainly temporal and intended to safeguard the political and social edifice. In Islamic belief the Creator indulgently overlooks the most flagrant violations of man's duty to God, himself and his fellow-man, as long as the sinner does not deny the Islamic creed and thus "associate" other deities with the true One. The absurdity of God's creating intelligent beings, thus inducing the necessary relationships of a moral order, but at the same time taking no sufficient means to insure this order's observance has not impressed Islamic moralists. "We declare no Moslem an infidel on account of any wrongdoing," says the Hanifite code of canon law, "even though the wrong-doing be serious, unless he declare it to be something allowed."

33. Islamic law forbids usury, games of chance and the use of pork and intoxicants. But a Moslem may violate any of these prohibitions or even genuine mandates of positive or natural law with a clear conscience, as long as he philosophizes somewhat as follows: If I drink this wine (or eat this pork, etc.) and defend it as a good act, I shall incur damnation, for I am denying the

Koran and the Prophet. If, however, I take this glass and say: I declare, O God, that wine is accursed because Thou hast forbidden it but Thou, O God, knowest my weakness and Thou art merciful,—and then I drink it, no harm is done.

34. The polygamy, slavery and rabid intolerance that popular opinion in the Occident traditionally associates with Islamism have a basis in fact, but all three are generally exaggerated. The Koran permits four wives, stipulating, however, that all be treated alike, an impossibility that Moslem modernists have interpreted as an implicit prohibition of the institution. Actually, economic reasons have made polygamy impracticable today for the common people in Moslem countries even where it has not been legally banned. The abolition of slavery's legal status through Occidental influence has condemned that institution to eventual extinction in those Moslem lands where it is still practiced. Intolerance in Islam, even before the gradual Europeanization of the Orient that in modern times has greatly mitigated it, was in practice a matter that depended on the whims of individual rulers rather than a religious policy as such. Koranic recommendations on the subject are contradictory, but the general attitude, as history records it, was toleration, broader indeed than in many parts of Europe after the Protestant revolt and colonial North America. The sporadic persecutions and slaughter of Christians in Islamic countries within the past century have been most often the outcome of political clashes or mob violence which are, unfortunately, evils not limited to lands where Islamism prevails.

4.
Islamic Juridical Doctrine

35. The Mohammedan "this-worldly" ideal being a theocratic society, no distinctions are drawn between the secular and the religious sphere. Accordingly the religious, civil and criminal codes form in theory but one body of law. Islamic jurisprudence in its initial stages was based on the Koran and on oral

traditions which were supposed to record the wisdom and actions of Mohammed in nearly every circumstance of life. These traditions were set down as canons by which believers were to guide their conduct even in such minor details as cutting the nails, using a toothpick and slicing a watermelon. When the Koran and tradition proved inadequate to cope with new statutory needs in conquered territories, recourse was had to two new fonts, analogical deduction and common consent. No central authority operated in determining the accuracy of an analogy or the existence of a common agreement among the faithful. These matters were left to a consensus of opinion among the legalists and teachers of jurisprudence. To them Islam also owes the various unscientific compilations of sayings today ascribed to Mohammed. These codifications, collectively known as the Hadith and undertaken from two to three centuries after the Prophet's death, represented an attempt to insure the validity of the important front of tradition and to put limits to the mass of legal fictions indiscriminately attributed to Islamism's founder in the course of centuries.

36. Like much of Europe's philosophy of positive law, Islamic jurisprudence borrowed heavily from the Roman codes and legal usages found operative in lands newly acquired by the sword. Greco-Byzantine legislation had its influence especially in the regulation of commerce and finance. Within two and a half centuries after the rise of the new faith four schools of jurisprudence gained recognition in orthodox Islam and are followed today by nearly three-fourths of the Moslem world. These four schools or rites are distinguished in their origins by the varying emphasis placed on each of the four fonts. The Hanifite code, which today guides over half the Sunnite or orthodox followers of Mohammed, depended to a small extent on tradition but emphasized strongly the principle of analogical deduction. The Shafiite school, adopted by a third of orthodox Islam, recognizes the principle of common agreement as superior even to the Koran as a basis of legal enactment. This expedient has assumed great importance in modern times among all legal schools as a means of adapting or abrogating outdated legislation to meet the needs of a rapidly changing world. The founder of the Malakite rite,

whose rulings are accepted today by about one-seventh of the Sunnite world, drew heavily on tradition in forming his legal system. He was also the first to use the principle of common consent later adopted by the Shafiites. The fourth and smallest of the rites, the Hanbalite, is at present followed only by a few million ultra-conservative nomads in Arabia. It bases its decisions on a literal interpretation of Mohammedan traditions and is becoming progressively less suited for modern needs. The heterodox, or Shi'ites, who number less than one-tenth of all Moslems, acknowledge none of the four Sunnite schools but are guided by their own legal standards and customs.

37. In these days the various systems administered by the four legal codes represent an ideal whose application to practical life is extremely limited. The Islamic conquests, even when successful in imposing the Mohammedan creed, rarely succeeded in eradicating legal usages of immemorial standing in subject territories. Thus in time the conqueror's code came to be supplemented by preexisting customs and a system of statutory legislation sanctioned and authenticated by local sovereigns or derived from European sources. As matters worked out in most countries subject to Moslem domination, a distinction gradually arose between personal and public law. Today details relating to religious practice and private life, points of ritual law, vows, oaths, legal guardianship, marital relations and divorce are handled by courts administering one of the codes of Islamic law proper. In another separate system of courts public or state law is applied to the settlement of criminal cases and civil affairs.

38. In modern times some of the more progressive Moslem countries have either become completely secularized or have based their whole state law on European systems. Thus Egypt for more than sixty years has been using as state law a revised version of the French Code. Turkey and Albania have displaced Islamic law in its entirety and have become secular states, the former adopting the Swiss civil code and the Italian criminal code in 1926, and the latter basing its civil and criminal law on that of France and Italy in 1929.

5.

Invasion from the Desert

Historical Expansion of Islamism

39. Desultory invasions of Bedouins driven by privation from the deserts of Arabia into the "sown" lands capping its northern limits had occurred from time immemorial. With the advent of Islam, however, this leakage suddenly became an explosion that shattered empires and fused diverse cultures in an area that dwarfed the holdings of imperial Rome. The beginnings of this expansion were modest and unplanned. Shortly after the Prophet's death in 632 A.D. when all Arabia lay subject to Islam, raiding expeditions were organized to push back the boundaries that separated the "abode of Islam" from the "abode of war." Mohammed's first successor, Abu Bakr, proclaimed to the sons of the desert, lean and hardened by privation, a call to "holy" combat. Faith in an other wordly crown was fortified by an appeal to the booty to be had for the taking from the subjects of Byzantium.

40. The Roman frontier post of Busra, delivered over by the treason of a Byzantine governor, was the first conquest of importance. With its fall the way to the weakly defended area, today comprising Transjordania, Syria and Palestine, lay open to the invaders. By 638 was completed a conquest whose ease and rapidity appeared miraculous to early Moslem chroniclers. The influence of Syria's fall was enormous. The prestige of the Moslems increased one hundredfold. Confidence grew in their own prowess and in what seemed manifest help from the Almighty. In 637 A.D. Arab forces by inflicting a decisive defeat on the Persians at Al-Qadisiyah in Iraq subjected that land to Moslem domination. In the same year the Persian capital city, Ctesiphon, fell into the hands of the conquerors after a lightning campaign. The initial conquest of Persia was achieved in a decade and in 652 the Persian Empire that had endured for twelve centuries was no more.

41. In the meantime Arab columns had encountered a Byzantine army in Egypt and had utterly routed it in 1640. A year later the entire land, including the great harbor fortress of Alexandria, was in Arab hands. The Egyptian successes were made permanent in 646 after a Byzantine attempt to retain possession of Alexandria had failed. The fall of Alexandria left the provinces to the west without adequate defense and by 656 the Islamic hosts held the North African coast as far west as the modern town of Gabes in Tunisia.

42. At the end of a little more than two decades the newly founded empire stretched over four thousand miles from Gabes to Balkh in present day Afghanistan and from modern Makhach-Kala in the Caucasus to the southern limits of Arabia. Sixty years later the Umayyad Caliphs had extended these boundaries to include all North Africa to the Atlantic and the Iberian peninsula to the Pyrenees with the sole exception of the northwest province of Asturias. Eastward the triumphant armies of Islam had crossed the Indus and penetrated the western provinces of China. Only to the south of Egypt was the Christian kingdom of Nubia to stem the advance for a few centuries.

43. In 732, just a hundred years after Mohammed's death, the Moslem drive into southwestern Europe faltered to a halt 145 miles southwest of Paris. Although the penetration of Islam was checked at this point, raids throughout southern France lasted on for several decades and the final expulsion of the Moors from western Europe was achieved only on the eve of Columbus' finding of a new hemisphere.

44. The history of Islamism's spread from the 8th century onwards is vast and complex. Though its political power has been in decline from the 9th century to modern times, Mohammed's religion has never ceased to make fresh conquests. Even its political fortunes were bettered for a time by the conversion of the Turks and the rise of the Ottoman Empire. From the 13th to the 17th century Turkish Moslem hordes swept over southeastern Europe and the Crimea. Only with the Turkish naval disaster at Lepanto in 1571 and their decisive defeat by Sobieski in 1683, before the walls of Vienna, did the tide of Islam

finally turn. In its wake it left large Moslem minorities throughout the Balkan countries where its political domination had endured.

45. But Islamism's religious victories have not been confined to the Mediterranean basin and western Asia. From the 10th century on it has made steady advances in the vast areas, south of the Sahara, inhabited by the Negro peoples of Africa. Today Islam's strongholds in these regions, roughly estimated, lie along the tenth degree north of the equator. There its percentages range all the way from thirty to seventy in the territories west of Ethiopia to practically one hundred per cent in the three Somalilands. Military conquest opened the way for many of these triumphs. But even more important has been the constant infiltration of Moslem traders who brought with their wares a religion that made few demands on the primitive nations to whom it was presented. In modern times British and French colonial policies in the interests of efficiency have aided Islamism's progress by financial aid to mosques and Moslem schools and by a preference shown for Moslems as civil and military aids. With these advantages of past preferment and temporal precedence in the field, Islamism stands forth as a most serious obstacle to the eventual triumph of the Faith in tribal Africa. Its progress is less rapid today than in past centuries but its advances into the regions south of the equator are steady and difficult to stem. Nevertheless, its threat to Christianity in Negro Africa, though grave, should not be overestimated. In most of these lands its penetration has been superficial. Instead of striking deep root as a religion in its own right, its practices have generally come to be regarded as merely a more potent kind of magic and have formed an amalgam with the animism that prevailed before its coming. Working to the disadvantage of Islamism is the more naturally Christian character of the Negro peoples, for they lack the capacity for fanaticism and bitter pride that shut off the Moslem of other racial origins from the teachings of Christ. At present the Catholic strategy is one of forestallment, since experience proves that Mohammed's creed can make no headway among tribes that have already embraced the Faith.

46. In India Islamism made its greatest gains by the sword in the early centuries of its expansion. But here also the prestige it acquired by generations of military rule won large numbers of converts from the lowest castes who had all to gain and nothing to lose by accepting a place in the Islamic brotherhood. After twelve centuries of Moslem pressure India is today the world's largest Mohammedan country even though its adherents number but twenty-three per cent of the total population. Being an opposed minority, their zeal and proselytizing activity are unsurpassed by the Moslems of any other land. In addition to its numbers and its aggressiveness, Indian Islam enjoys the distinction of being a hotbed of heterodoxy. In the second half of the 19th century embittered conservatism, in the face of Occidental influences, provoked a modernistic reaction from within unparalleled elsewhere in the Moslem world. It is in India that the greatest efforts have been made to adapt Islamism to modern needs by an indiscriminate sacrificing of religious values to secular contingencies. Politically self-conscious and frankly rationalistic, India's small but vocal minority of literate Moslems promise to be both their own worst enemies and a threat to the continuance of Islamism as a religion by haste in discarding their creed's more permanent elements in favor of progress at any price.

47. Malaysia and the East Indian islands, though territorially remote from the geographical centers of Islam, lay athwart the sea routes used by Arab merchants as early as the 8th century. In these thickly peopled regions peaceful persuasion by Moslem traders, preachers and adventurers who married native women, mingled with the common people and adopted their customs gained many to Islam. Civil wars, too, and a display of Islamic religious solidarity and social ascendency have played their part in winning the adherence of the Malay peoples. The process of conversion which began a hundred years after the rise of Islam was quickened by the establishment of Moslem kingdoms in Sumatra in the 13th century and in Java in the 15th century. Today practically the entire population of the East Indies is nominally Moslem.

48. In all its major victories Islam progressed through two stages; that of domination, either military or political, and that of religious conversion. Its military expansion in the first centuries of its existence was favored by cultural and racial disunity in the ranks of the conquered, by dissatisfaction engendered by heavy taxation and religious persecution and, finally, by the Arab military technique which was distinguished by mobility and was ideally adapted to plain and desert warfare. Important beyond all, however, were the economic privations that drove the Bedouin hordes in search of booty and the *esprit de corps* and high morale that religious fanaticism engendered in them.

49. Religious expansion was far slower. Only after two or three centuries had elapsed did the masses of the people under Islamic rule begin to adopt the faith of the conqueror. Numerous conversions followed close on military subjugation, but the surprising thing is that Islamism did not triumph sooner. Part of the population of the newly conquered lands was made up of folk newly converted to Christianity. Many Christians of long standing, moreover, were weakened in faith by heresy, schism and injudicious attempts by Byzantium to impose unity of thought by physical means. But the gradual swing to Islamism was dictated above all, on the part of those converted, by self interest. Adopting the faith of the rulers insured increased social prestige and security and freed one from the humiliating tribute exacted of non-Moslems. Finally, whole tribes were forcibly Islamized and, even where actual violence was not used, intolerant legislation enacted by individual caliphs drove waverers into the camp of the ruling class.

50. But in places where Christianity was firmly established and free from internal dissension Islamism made little progress. Although under its influence almost from the beginning, Christian territories in North Africa, Nubia, northern Iraq and Persia were Islamized only after the wearing process of many centuries of moral pressure and active persecution. Even today lands that fell under the shadow of Moslem rule thirteen centuries since have large minorities of heroic Christians who have clung to their faith with a constancy inherited from martyred forebears.

6.
The Waning of the Crescent
Islamism's Present Power

51. The crude oversimplifications of Islamism, its occasionalism and superficial formalism make their primary appeal to primitive and backward segments of mankind. What truth and morality it does possess is Christian or Jewish in its origins. These are the necessary elements of its creed that give it its value as a religion. What distinguishes it from genuine revelation, what makes it Islamism, is contingent and, like every faith that fails to satisfy man's natural longings for a profounder life in and with God, is doomed eventually to die. How soon the faith of Mohammed will cease to be important as a world religion depends on how the forces of disintegration now active within it continue to influence its adherents.

52. These forces are inherent in the material culture of the Occident that Islam is now hastening to adopt. Political, economic and educational reforms initiated in the early part of this century and especially after World War I have begun to transform Moslem society. Along with increasing literacy and a thirst for education goes a questioning attitude toward the authority of Islamism as a religious creed. The degeneracies of Western culture—rationalism, hypercriticism and skepticism—have their following today in Moslem thought. Modernists like Muhamad Iqbal, Mahmoud Mohtar Katirjoglou, Syed Amir Ali and Muhamad Badr are active in spreading throughout Islam the errors of Bertrand Russell, Whitehead and Rietschl. The object that these so-called reformers have set themselves is the adaptation of Islamism to modern needs. But peace of heart, supernatural union with God and happiness in the possession of the truth cannot grow in the barren soil of materialism and rationalism.

53. The rise of an industrial proletariat, *déracinée*, a pawn in the economic machine and unsettled by Soviet propaganda, is

speeding the process of religous decay in many Moslem lands of today. Ideas that spread slowly in centuries past are now rapidly diffused even among the illiterate via the screen and the radio. In modern times nationalism has tended to usurp ancient loyalties to the Islamic world community and in the recent past has been responsible for outbreaks of violence against the ruling powers throughout the Moslem world. Chauvinism and race hatred exercise the fascination of novelties among Islam's rude masses in Malaysia, India and the Arab East.

54. Still associated with these manifestations in many instances is the fanaticism inherited from times past, but where nationalism and Western ideas have penetrated deeply, Islamism is viewed with a mere sentimental regard and divested of influence on practical life. If need arises, it is used as a political cement by the enterprising politician in his dealings with the ignorant whom he secretly despises. In the light, then, of present trends Islamism as a religion seems destined to play an increasingly smaller role in world affairs. Liberty of conscience and individual responsibility in religious matters appear to be nearing genuine realization in Islam, unfortunately not through any acknowledgment of the Christian principles on which they are based, but through the triumph of religious indifferentism.

55. Trends of this kind, however, do not necessarily indicate any mass turning from Islamism in the near future. Those influenced by the diseased side of Western culture are as yet a small even though powerful minority. Numerically the world of Islam grows several millions each year by natural increase and proselytism. The great masses ruled by ignorance and fanatical pride remain loyal to the orthodox faith of Mohammed even when they do not observe its precepts. Laicized Turkey still recognizes Islamism as the national religion; Egypt, present cultural center of Islam, aims at being a modern, but also a Moslem state. There orthodox influence is dominant and systematic religious instruction is being organized to insure a more rational and profound attachment to the national faith. Ibn Saud, absolute ruler of Arabia, guides his subjects according to a literal interpretation of the Koran but uses modern inventions such as the radio, aero-

plane, telephone and automobile while striving to remain free of the weakening influence and sybaritism they symbolize to the strict Moslem.

56. Nevertheless, issues are becoming more clearly defined in today's world. Illogical and nondescript creeds must ultimately settle in favor of the true Faith or materialism, of a "this-worldly" or an "other-worldly" view of man's life on earth. Islam, too, must take its place in the coming struggle. Doubt and uncertainty are rife among great masses of today's 300,000,000 Moslems. Only Christ's Church can give Islam the help it needs today more than ever before in its thirteen century past. In the providence of God may that help be not too long in coming.

7.

Mohammedan Missiology

Methods of Approaching the Problem

57. In his attempt to establish the Faith in Moslem lands the Catholic missionary encounters a number of difficulties peculiar to this apostolate. Islamism still remains for the great masses of its adherents not merely a religion but a social system and a nationality. Hence, to turn from that faith in an environment where it dominates is to separate oneself from parents, family, friends and relatives, even wife and children,—from means of subsistence and from all hope of political consideration. To conceal the fact of conversion is difficult, since many Moslem governments now require adults to register any change of religion with civil authorities. Abandoning Islamism is no longer a capital offense in modernized Islamic states, but even now relatives often wipe out the "stain" on family honor with the blood of the offending convert. Even though not all of these consequences might follow in a particular case, or should one dissatisfied with Islamism have the heroism to accept them, still the distorted statements and denials of Christian doctrine that form part

of Koranic teaching and are imbedded in the mind of every Moslem exclude even the consideration of Christianity as an alternative to their own faith in the eyes of most followers of Mohammed. The gradual Europeanization of many Islamic centers is beginning to weaken the self-satisfaction and fanatical pride that in the past branded non-Moslems as social and intellectual inferiors, but the indifferentism that often results either closes the mind to all religious influence or insures the permanence of Islam for purely pragmatic reasons. These obstacles become less where Islamism is less deeply rooted or where its adherents form a minority in the local population. Thus in the East Indies, parts of India and in the Balkans the missionary can carry on a direct apostolate with Moslems much as he does with other non-Catholics.

58. But in this age the direct method of preaching Christian truths and catechizing is not a practicable approach to the great majority of Moslems. On the other hand, the omission of a detailed account, beyond the scope of the present study, must not be interpreted as a denial of the gigantic ambitions and heroic labors of missionaries of past centuries on behalf of the Moslem world. The Dominicans and Franciscans in the early 13th century laid the first organized plans for the spiritual reduction of Islam. St. Francis of Assisi himself fearlessly entered a fanatical Moslem encampment at Damietta in 1219 to preach Christ to the Sultan of Egypt. During the first half of the 13th century the Dominican Province of Spain undertook the conversion of the Moslems of that land, while the Preachers in the Holy Land extended their labors throughout southwestern Asia. At the same time Dominican missionaries courageously ventured onto the coast of Africa where they opened a convent and a school of Arabic in Tunis. In the latter part of the same century, Blessed Raymond Lully, a Franciscan tertiary, importuned popes and kings to turn their efforts to the conversion of the Moslems. Author of numerous polemical writings directed to the conquest of Islam and founder of a school for Islamic studies and Arabic in 1276, his life was a series of intense labors and sad disappointments crowned by martyrdom by stoning at the hands of a Mo-

hammedan mob. From late medieval until modern times, Franciscans and Dominicans gave scores of martyrs to their difficult apostolate in the heartlands of Islam that border the Mediterranean's eastern and southern shores. Their labors were extended in the late 17th century by the Lazarists, Capuchins and Augustinians. During the same period the Trinitarians and Mercedarians sold themselves into slavery to ransom Christian captives from the hands of Moslem masters. To gain the Moslem world for Christ was also the original intention of St. Ignatius Loyola and his first companions of the Society of Jesus. But God had other designs for the newly founded Order and St. Ignatius' early ambitions were never realized in his own person, although they were fulfilled by those of his martyred sons who helped carry on the work, established by the older Orders, of preaching the word of God to the Moslems.

59. The apostolic labors undertaken among Moslems in centuries past resulted in no great numbers of converts, but they continued and kept alive a tradition of heroism and laid the foundations of a methodology for those who seek the spiritual conquest of Islam in modern days. Nothing is foolish, nothing vain when endured for the love of the Master Who judges the labors of His disciples not by their results in terms that this world will recognize, but by the love and zeal that are their soul.

60. In modern times experience shows that, where Islamism has full sway, indirect methods, such as education and example, are alone feasible. The saintly hermit of the Sahara, Père Charles de Foucauld, exemplified the latter method by leading a life of intense prayer, suffering and mortification among the Moslems of Algeria in the early part of the present century. Today his followers, the Petits Frères du Sacré-Coeur, carry on his labors at El Abiodh Sidi-Sheikh. The character of their apostolate is best summed up in the instructions of their founder:

> Perpetual exposition and adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament are our special characteristic work. The Blessed Sacrament should always be exposed in each fraternity. By the presence of our Lord . . . the people round about are wonderfully sanctified . . . and . . . our life becomes the life of Nazareth, . . . passed in continual sight of Jesus, our Lord.

61. Outstanding in the breadth of vision and the permanence of his achievements in the apostolate of Islam is Cardinal Lavigerie. As Archbishop of Algiers in the latter half of the 19th century, he undertook the conversion of the Moslems in the extensive territories committed to his care. For this purpose he organized trade schools, agricultural colonies, orphanages and hospitals where the Arab-speaking peoples of North Africa might be brought into contact with Catholic life and doctrine. The White Fathers, whose congregation he founded to help realize his apostolic projects, combine contemplation and sacrifice with the more active method of seeking occasions for contact and conversation with the Moslems among whom they live. This has been accomplished especially by the establishment among the people of the clubs for the discussion of indifferent topics. In these meetings the missionary, dealing preferably with an individual, quietly turns the conversation to Christianity, describing its universal character, its advantages for society and the individual and tactfully undermines the Moslem prejudice that to become a Christian is to step down in the social scale. This method requires great prudence and its success in the past has depended largely on the good will and respect that the White Fathers have gained from the Moslems of North Africa. One approach always possible in such discussions is the diffusing of a formula of perfect contrition that Moslems, as believers in one God, just and holy, can accept and recite as part of their daily prayer.

62. Hospitals and dispensaries established among Moslem peoples by Catholic medical missionaries have proved great gainers of the good will that is a necessary groundwork for any successful apostolate in the future. Practical Christian charity of this kind, transcending religious differences and motivated by the love of God evident in the lives of the religious that staff these medical units, causes reflection that has been a "beginning of faith" for many former followers of Mohammed.

63. Education, too, from the primary grades to postgraduate and professional studies, provides a means of indirect approach that has been most effective in reducing Moslem prejudice and

hostility. Catholic educators have in many instances been sought by the common people in Moslem lands who are quick to recognize the evils of a purely secular, amoral training of the young. Catholic schools in Islamic countries are especially desirable from the missionary viewpoint since they there fulfill a twofold function. In Egypt, Syria and Iraq particularly, they aid in building up a strong faith in the hearts of Christian minorities and in rousing Oriental Catholics from the passiveness to which centuries of discrimination and persecution have often reduced them through no fault of their own. In addition, they free Moslem students from the ignorance and pride which have been Islamism's chief assets in maintaining its dominance as a world religion. The missionary apostolate of Catholic education is of unique importance in Java where eighty per cent of the converts from Islamism are graduates of Catholic schools.

64. Up to the present time the chief objective of Catholic missionary effort among the Moslem peoples has been to prepare the soil and plant the harvest that must be reaped by future generations. The development of transport and communications in the last few decades has laid the Islamic world open to the inroads of the shallow philosophies of rationalism and materialism, but it has also put Moslems increasingly in contact with the high ideals and moral standards of Christianity. In recent times there has been a gratifying growth in interest in the problems that Islamism offers the Catholic missionary. Leading Catholic universities, such as the Gregorian at Rome, the Catholic Institute of Paris and the Catholic University at Washington, offer courses in Arabic and Islamic theology, history and cultural institutions. The *Semaine de Missiologie* held yearly at Louvain until the outbreak of World War II greatly increased Catholic consciousness of Islam and in its yearbook made permanent contributions to Islamic missiology. The establishment of the Catholic quarterly, *En Terre d'Islam,* twenty years ago, with present offices in Lyons, also marked an important advance in Islamic studies. Its monthly bulletin of information on Moslem affairs throughout the world is paralleled perhaps only by the outstanding Italian periodical, *Oriente Moderno.*

65. Protestant missionaries, too, for more than a century, have manifested remarkable zeal and devotion to the task of winning over the Moslem to Christianity. During the past thirty-six years they have published a periodical, *The Moslem World,* outlining current events and religious trends among Moslem peoples.

66. The primary instrument in the conversion of Islam is unremitting prayer that God will touch with His all powerful grace the pride and obduracy of Mohammed's followers. Ordinarily, however, God requires the cooperation of His creatures. In this order, then, beyond the grace that is presupposed, the first requirement for a successful Moslem apostolate is a trained personnel. A Catholic missionary will accomplish little in this field of apostolic endeavor unless he has freed his mind of popular misconceptions regarding Islamism and has learned to evaluate, not only the prejudices and shortcomings, but also the good qualities of the people who follow Mohammed's creed. Such in general were the sentiments of Pius XI expressed at the opening of the Mission Exposition in Rome in 1924:

> We live in times when it is clear that the heroism which is inseparable from the missionary life, if taken alone, is not enough. Experience does not suffice to assure a successful apostolate. If one wishes to gather the full fruit of his sacrifice and labor, he has to seek from science the light by which to discover the most direct ways and most efficacious means.

67. God in His providence may be permitting the evils of materialism and religious indifferentism to gain ground in Moslem lands as a remote preparation there for the coming of the true Faith. But in itself the present decline of Islamism as a religious force can only add to the evils that beset mankind in the atomic age, unless faith in Mohammed's mission be replaced by faith in our Saviour and His Church in which alone is the ordinary way to external salvation.

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Study Outline

By Gerald C. Treacy, S.J.

Part 1. Paragraphs 1-18

About 300 million people scattered over Asia, Africa and Europe believe that the theocracy founded by Mohammed in the 7th century is destined to complete and supplant Christianity. In 622 the Mohammedan era began. When the Prophet died in 632 Arabia was Mohammedan.

The revelations supposedly given to Mohammed are contained in the Koran. This book is a mixture of Scripture, folklore, hymns and rules of conduct. Mohammed taught that Judaism and Christianity were national forms of one true religion, but were superseded by Islam or submission to God's Will. Religiously sincere as a reformer, he was ambitious for worldly power.

It is the Koran that unites the Islamic community wherever found. The book is venerated almost to the point of adoration. It is held to be the uncreated word of God. To interpret this book and supply its many dogmatic and moral lacunae, Islam has had recourse to the Traditions. These Traditions are supposed to recount the behavior of the Prophet in every detail of ordinary life.

No authentic religious authority exists in Islam. Even the institution of the caliphate was not intended to provide a source of doctrinal guidance or authentic interpretation.

An act of faith in God's unicity and Mohammed's prophetic mission makes a believer in the Islamic community. Salvation depends on this faith alone. Besides His unicity the God of the Koran is possessed of omnipotence and transcendence. To Mohammed God is an all-powerful despot ruling by caprice and arbitrary decree.

Questions

How do the Mohammedans regard Christianity?
How long has Mohammedanism lasted and what is its numerical strength?
Give a brief sketch of the Prophet's life up to 622.
What does the Koran contain?
How did Mohammed imitate the Jewish prophets?
How did Mohammed regard Judaism and Christianity?
What reforms did Mohammed effect in Arabia of the 7th century?
On what score may the Prophet be called insincere?
How may we account for the many contradictory texts in the Koran?
Why is Mohammedanism not a synonym for Islam?
How does the Moslem regard the Koran?
What are the Traditions in Islamism?
Does an authentic religious authority exist in Islam?
Does the caliphate resemble the Papacy?
What are the two essentials of Mohammedan belief?
Explain the meaning of faith in Mohammed's teaching.
What did the Prophet understand by the Trinity?
What are the attributes of the God of the Koran?

Part 2. Paragraphs 19-34

Over-emphasis on God's omnipotence by Islamic theologians has led to the rejection of secondary causes, and a fixed norm of morality. Evil is what God forbids; good what He commands.

Absolute predestination cannot be proved from the Koran. Mohammedanism's fatalism does not come from predestination but from the belief in God's arbitrary guidance of the universe. The conviction of God's overwhelming power excludes any semblance of love for God our Father. Acceptance of God's unicity and Mohammed's prophetic role implies for the Moslem belief in the angels, revealed books, the prophets, the day of

judgment and God's decrees regarding good and evil. Mohammedanism borrowed much from Jewish and Christian sources.

The believing Moslem builds his life on the five pillars of religious duty; the reciting of the creed, ritual worship, fasting, almsgiving and pilgrimage. Ritual worship is performed five times a day, announced by the crier from the mosque. Friday is the Moslem holyday. There is no priesthood or sacrifice in Moslem worship. Total abstinence from food and drink from dawn to dusk is enjoined during the month of Ramadan. Almsgiving is a matter of personal observance. Once in his lifetime every Moslem must make a pilgrimage to Mecca.

Islamism has leveled social and racial barriers. Like Communism it believes in force to spread its creed. Today, however, the "holy war" is not insisted upon. In Moslem worship externals are an end in themselves. Externalism characterizes Islamism in the realm of morals. Polygamy, slavery and intolerance have a basis in fact, but as common practice in Moslem life they have ceased. Economic conditions have made polygamy impractical. The Koran permits four wives. The periodic Islamic persecutions of the last century have generally been the outcome of political clashes or mob violence.

Questions

What has Mohammedan over-insistence on God's omnipotence led to?
Does the Koran prove absolute predestination?
What is the motive of Mohammedan fatalism?
How is love for God affected by Moslem belief?
What has Moslemism borrowed from Judaism and Christianity?
What are the Moslem five pillars of religious duty?
Describe Moslem ritual worship.
Has Moslemism a priesthood and a sacrifice?
Explain the Moslem laws of abstinence and almsgiving.
Describe the annual pilgrimage to Mecca.
What is Moslemism's concrete expression of social and racial equality?

Why did Moscow officially sponsor a Mecca pilgrimage?
In what does Communism resemble Moslemism?
What part do externals play in the religion of Mohammed?
Contrast this with externals in the Church of Christ.
What does the Moslem mean by sin?
What does Islamic law forbid?
What is the Moslem attitude toward polygamy, slavery and intolerance?
What does the Koran say of polygamy?

Part 3. Paragraphs 35-50

In Islamism, religious, civil and criminal codes blend into one body of law. In the beginning Islamic jurisprudence was based on the Koran and on oral traditions which recorded the wisdom and practice of Mohammed in every detail of life. When these sources proved inadequate in conquered countries, recourse was had to analogical deduction and common consent.

Two and a half centuries after the rise of Mohammedanism four schools of jurisprudence arose and are followed today in the greater part of the Moslem world. Progressive modern Moslem countries base their law on European systems.

The fall of the Roman frontier post of Busra marked the beginning of Moslem conquests. Transjordania, Syria, Palestine and Persia were conquered. The Persian Empire had endured for twelve centuries. By 646 Egypt was under Moslem sway. In 732, a hundred years after Mohammed's death, the Moslem drive halted in southwestern Europe, 145 miles southwest of Paris. The expulsion of the Moors from Europe was not achieved till the days of Ferdinand and Isabella. After Lepanto in 1571, and Sobieski's victory before the walls of Vienna in 1683 the advance of Islam was checked.

From the 10th century Islam advanced in Africa. Military conquest, Moslem traders, and in recent times British and French colonial policies aided the spread of Islamism. Yet it has not affected the Negro deeply as a religion.

After twelve centuries of Moslem pressure, India today is the world's largest Mohammedan country. Here the greatest effort

has been made to adapt Moslemism to modern needs. The Crescent has conquered successfully the East Indies. Today the entire East Indian population is nominally Moslem.

Islam progressed through two stages; military or political penetration and conversion. Religious expansion was slower. It took two or three centuries and was due mainly to force on the part of the Moslem conquerors and self-interest on the part of the conquered. Where Christianity was firmly established Islamism made little progress.

Questions

Are the religious, civil and criminal codes separate in Moslem Law?
On what is Islamic jurisprudence based?
Explain the four Moslem schools of jurisprudence.
How does Moslem law work out today?
Why was the frontier post of Busra an important Moslem conquest?
Give a summary of Moslem conquests.
When were the Moors finally expelled from Europe?
What happened at Lepanto in 1571 and at Vienna in 1683?
What were the contributing factors to Moslem penetration of Africa?
Has Moslemism struck deep roots into Negro Africa?
What is the present Catholic strategy against Moslemism?
What was the appeal of Moslemism in India?
What is the largest Mohammedan country?
Where is Moslem zeal strongest?
How far has Indian Moslemism adapted itself to modern needs?
Explain Moslem success in the East Indies.
What were the two stages through which Islamism progressed?
Was Moslem religious expansion rapid?
What progress did Moslemism make in well-established Christian areas?

Part 4. Paragraphs 51-67

The oversimplification of Islamism appeals to the backward sectors of mankind. Whatever truth it has stems from Judaism or Christianity. Forces of disintegration are at work in modern Islamism. Degeneracies of Western culture have invaded Moslem thought. Nationalism is breaking down the old Islamic loyalties. As a religion Islamism is failing to influence world affairs. Indifferentism is gaining. Doubt and uncertainty are rife among the masses of today's 300 million Moslems.

Many difficulties block the way to Moslem conversions. To the majority of Moslems Islamism is not only a religion but a social system and a nationality. Separation from the Moslem faith brings with it untold hardships and often death. The missionary cannot use the direct methods of preaching and catechizing. Indirect methods such as education and example are alone feasible. Two outstanding figures in the modern Moslem apostolate were Fr. Charles de Foucauld and Cardinal Lavigerie.

Besides schools, hospitals and dispensaries lay the groundwork of future conversion. Up to the present the chief objective of Catholic missionary effort has been to prepare the soil and plant the seeds of a future harvest. Besides the indispensable weapon of prayer the Moslem apostolate calls for a well-trained personnel.

Questions

What elements give Moslemism its value as a religion?
What are the disintegrating forces at work today in Moslemism?
What objectives have modern Moslem reformers?
What is speeding the process of religious decay in Moslem lands?
State some of the difficulties facing the Catholic missionary in Moslem lands.
Is the direct method of preaching feasible among the Moslems?
What missionaries laid the foundation of the Moslem apostolate in the 13th century?
What was the original intention of Ignatius and the early Jesuits?
Has the Moslem apostolate produced many conversions?

Describe the apostolate of Fr. Charles de Foucauld and Cardinal Lavigerie.

Enumerate the means of indirect approach to the Moslem mind.

What twofold functions do Catholic schools fulfill in Moslem lands?

What has been the Catholic missionary objective up to the present among Moslems?

After prayer what is the main requirement of the Moslem apostolate?

What did Pius XI call for in the Moslem missionary?

A NOTE ON THE AUTHOR

Father O'Shaughnessy is now engaged in special Semitic studies. Previous training was received at West Baden College, Indiana; Loyola University, Chicago; School of Oriental Languages, Bikfaya, Lebanon; Université Saint-Joseph, Beirut, and Woodstock College, Maryland. He has contributed to *America, The Catholic Mind, Jesuit Missions* and other publications.

The study outline and questions for "Islamism, Its Rise and Decline" were formulated by Gerald C. Treacy, S.J., who has prepared study club editions of various encyclicals.

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